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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the results of a statewide survey of elementary school principals by the Illinois State Board of Education to obtain information on the status of early childhood education in Illinois public and nonpublic schools. Such information has important implications for principals developing policies and programs, for determining the certification and placement of principals in schools, and in designing and implementing preservice and inservice programs to enhance the knowledge and skills of principals. More specifically, the survey collected information about: (1) the supply and demand for early childhood education programs and services as perceived by local school officials, (2) the various types of kindergarten programs currently in operation among the public and nonpublic schools, (3) the number and types of early childhood education programs, and (4) the opinions of local school officials concerning selected early childhood education issues. Conclusions drawn indicate that large scale inservice training is needed for principals in early childhood education if the provision of such programming in the public schools is to be expanded and improved and if principals are to play an educational leadership role in the process. Extensive tables summarizing survey results and the survey form are included. (DST)

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# Attitudes, Experience and Education of Illinois Elementary Principals Concerning Early Childhood Education

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ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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July, 1985

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Walter W. Naumer, Jr., Chairman
State Board of Education

Ted Sanders
State Superintendent of Education

# FOREWORD

In response to a request by the Illinois State Board of Education, staff conducted a comprehensive study of early childhood education. This report on the results of a survey of elementary school principals about early childhood education issues was prepared by Dr. Louis Ferratier, Research and Statistics Section, Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation. The interpretations and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the State Board of Education.

Ted Sanders
State Superintendent of Education

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# INTRODUCTION

The State Board of Education directed its staff to conduct a study of early childhood education. As a part of this study, a survey instrument was developed to obtain baseline information indicative of the status of early childhood education in the public and nonpublic schools of Illinois. The survey instrument was designed to collect information encompassing four broad areas: (1) the supply and demand for early childhood education programs and services as perceived by local school officials, (2) the various types of kindergarten programs currently in operation among the public and nonpublic schools, (3) the number and types of early childhood education programs and (4) the opinions of local school officials concerning selected early childhood education issues. (See Appendix A for a copy of the survey instrument.)

## Purpose

The purposes of this report are to (a) present the background and rationale underlying the survey; (b) profile the experience, education and training reported by principals; (c) describe the opinions of principals on early childhood education issues; and (d) describe the pattern of responses to the opinion items by groups of principals in relation to their reported teaching, coursework and training experiences. Such information has important implications for developing policies and programs for current principals, determining the certification and placement of principals in schools, and in designing and implementing preservice and inservice programs to enhance the knowledge and skills of principals.

## Background

In recent years, the State Board of Education has undertaken the reevaluation of issues and assumptions that underlie the functions and purposes of public schools in implementing public education policy in Illinois. Commonly called the Mandates Studies, these efforts are ongoing and have resulted in identification of a number of education issues. One such issue involved early childhood education.

In the fall of 1983, a task force of State Board of Education staff was formed and charged with the responsibility of conducting a comprehensive study of early childhood education and developing policy alternatives for consideration by the State Board of Education. The Task Force initiated a substantial search of the literature on child development and early childhood education, formulated a working definition of early childhood education, reviewed available data on public school programs and services offered to very young children, and visited a number of public and nonpublic schools which operated various types of early childhood education programs that were known to the staff.

In the spring of 1984, a census of public and nonpublic schools concerning the nature and extent of their early childhood education programs and services was planned, and development of the instrumentation was begun. The first step was selection of the population to be surveyed.

Principals were chosen as the local school officials to be surveyed. Four major considerations led to this decision. First, Section 10-21.4a of the School Code of Illinois specifies:

> The principal shall assume administrative responsibilities and instructional leadership, . . . for the planning, operation and evaluation of the educational program of the area to which he is assigned. The principal shall submit recommendations to the superintendent concerning the appointment, retention, promotion and assignment of all personnel assigned to the attendance center.

Second, it was assumed that the principal was most likely to have the information concerning the various instructional programs offered in the school. Third, it was assumed that the attitudes and opinions of the principal were instrumental in identifying the need for early childhood education programs within the residential area served by the school. Fourth, it was assumed that the opinions held by the principal would be reflected in the provision of such services.

In designing the instrument, it was also assumed that the responses of principals to the early childhood education issue questions might be influenced by (a) teaching experience, (b) any formal coursework related to early childhood education, (c) any workshops on early childhood education, and (d) concern regarding the costs of early childhood education programs. Therefore, data analysis was conducted to determine whether these factors had a differential effect on responses. The opinion questions were prefaced with a request that principals respond to the questions or statements as they would if costs were not a factor. Also, principals were asked to complete items indicating the grade levels at which they had teaching experience and whether they had completed formal coursework or attended workshops related to early childhood education so that the possible influence of these factors on responses could be analyzed.

The opinion items were designed to focus upon four key issues: (1) school admission criteria, (2) full-day kindergartens for children, (3) whether or not public schools should operate childcare, preschool and parent education programs, and (4) whether any such programs operated by public schools should be operated on a tuition-free basis or on a tuition basis that recognizes the differential ability of parents to pay the full tuition costs. These four key issues were addressed by formulating eight statements or propositions to which the principals were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement.

## Instrument Design

The instrument design was structured to gather information that would address the key issues identified. A draft instrument was prepared and selectively distributed for critical expert review. The initial draft instrument was revised on the basis of the critiques received, and a second draft instrument was then pilot-tested with a select group of public school principals. This second instrument was revised and submitted for critique by the Advisory Council of Nonpublic Schools, and a third, revised draft instrument was pilot-tested among both public and nonpublic school principals.

The instruments were mailed in mid-September 1984 to 4,041 school principals, representing 2,946 public schools and 1,095 registered nonpublic schools. Follow-up mailings were conducted in mid-October, mid-November and mid-December. The data collection effort was terminated at the end of January 1985 and yielded an overall response rate of 90%, with a 94% response rate from public school principals and a 79.5% response rate from nonpublic school principals. A total of 3,492 principals (86.4% of the population) responded to Part III of the survey instrument that contained the issue statements and the items concerning teaching experience, formal coursework, and workshop attendance.

Because many respondents checked the grade levels at which they had taught, rather than recording the number of years' experience at each level as requested, analysis was limited to a description of their teaching experience. A few principals reported teaching experience in ungraded schools or one-room schools.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this report, terms were defined as follows.

Early childhood education means programs and services directed toward the care, development, and education of nonhandicapped children between the ages of birth and the time of entry into first grade.

Childcare services are services that provide primarily supervision and custodial care for children. Childcare services may have an educational component.

Preschool services are services which emphasize educational and developmental activities as the primary focus of an organized and planned program for children not yet enrolled in kindergarten.

Latchkey programs are programs designed to provide supervision of children before and/or after regular school hours.

Transitional grades are intermediate grades that overlap two or more of the traditional grades of kindergarten, 1, 2, or 3, and are designed for students who need additional educational services before transferring into the regular grade. Children enrolled in these transitional grades may or may not be eligible for special education services.

Academically oriented programs refers to programs where the primary emphasis is on direct, formal instruction to develop reading and math skills.

Experiential/social/play oriented programs refers to programs where the primary emphasis is on child-selected activities with concrete materials and experiences based on individual children's readiness for such experiences.

Parent education programs are programs designed to teach parents of young children methods and techniques of effective child development.

Elementary school is used in this report to describe broadly any school which encompasses any one or more grades below ninth grade or which encompasses an ungraded curriculum for children between the ages of 5-15 years. Excluded are special education schools for handicapped children.

Preprimary grades or levels are defined as kindergarten and prekindergarten, or programs encompassing both the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten grade spans.

Primary grades are defined as the common school grades 1, 2 and 3.

## Limitations

The findings of this study are limited by the following major factors or considerations.

(1) The study population, while encompassing all public and registered nonpublic elementary schools, does not encompass all private institutions which may characterize themselves as schools and may offer early childhood education programs, but which fail to register with the State Board of Education.

(2) The study population did not include licensed childcare facilities which, as a condition of licensure, must include an education component and which were not registered with the State Board of Education as nonpublic schools or were not operated by a public school.

## FORMAL EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The concern regarding the influence of teaching experience on principals, responses was addressed by asking principals to indicate the number of years of teaching experience at five grade levels and across two grade spans. Specifically, principals were asked to record the number of years of teaching experience they possessed at the (a) prekindergarten level; (b) kindergarten level; (c) first-grade level; (d) second-grade level; (e) third-grade level; (f) middle-school level, i.e. grades 4 through 8; and (g) high-school level, i.e. grades 9 through 12.

The concern regarding the influence of early childhood education coursework or workshops on responses was addressed by asking principals to respond to the following question: "Within the last 10 years have you, the principal, had any formal coursework or attended workshops that focused primarily on the development of young children (i.e. children below age 8)? The responses of principals to this item were summarized and used in analyzing the response patterns in relationship to their variables.

## Teaching Experience

Almost 81% of the 3,492 principals with prior teaching experience indicated they had teaching experience at the middle-school level, while 34.8% of the principals reported experience at the primary level. More than 28% reported teaching experience at the high-school level, and 13% reported teaching experience at the preprimary level. More nonpublic school principals

(21.4%) reported teaching experience at the preprimary level than did public school principals (9.8%), while public school principals were more likely to have middle school (82.5%) or high school (31.3%) teaching experience than nonpublic school principals. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1

Number and Percentage of Principals Reporting Teaching Experience at Preprimary, Primary, Middle and High School Levels

| Level | Grade Span | # With Experience at Specified Level | | | % of Responding Principals | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Public | Nonpublic | Total | Public | Nonpublic | Total |
| Pre-Primary | Pre-K | 248 | 207 | 455 | 9.8% | 21.4% | 13.0% |
| Primary | 1-3 | 696 | 519 | 1,215 | 27.6% | 53.7% | 34.8% |
| Middle | 4-8 | 2,084 | 734 | 2,818 | 82.5% | 76.0% | 80.7% |
| High | 9-12 | 791 | 212 | 1,003 | 31.3% | 22.0% | 28.7% |

Almost 40% of the principals reported teaching experience limited to only one of the four levels, while the remaining 60.2% of the principals reported teaching experiences spanning two or more of the four levels. Approximately one-third of the principals (32.7%) reported experience limited to middle-school, 17.6% of the principals reported experience spanning both primary and middle-school levels, and 16.4% reported experience spanning middle-school and high-school levels. Virtually every possible combination of experience was reported by at least a few principals. (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2

Composite Profiles of Teaching Experience of Principals

| Levels Taught | # of Principals in Group | % |
|---|---|---|
| Preprimary | 45 | 1.29 |
| Preprimary/Primary | 83 | 2.38 |
| Preprimary/Middle | 31 | 0.89 |
| Preprimary/High | 2 | 0.06 |
| Preprimary/Primary/Middle | 194 | 5.56 |
| Preprimary/Primary/High | 5 | 0.14 |
| Preprimary/Middle/High | 12 | 0.34 |
| Preprimary/Primary/Middle High | 83 | 2.38 |
| Primary Only | 57 | 1.63 |
| Primary/Middle | 612 | 17.54 |
| Primary/High | 10 | 0.29 |
| Primary/Middle/High | 169 | 4.84 |
| Middle Only | 1,141 | 32.70 |
| Middle/High | 573 | 16.42 |
| High Only | 148 | 4.24 |
| None Indicated | 324 | 9.29 |
| Total | 3,489 | 99.99 |

## Formal Coursework

Virtually one-third (33.5%) of all the principals indicated they had completed a formal course on the development of young children (i.e., children under age 8) within the past 10 years. As shown in Table 3, more nonpublic school principals (38.5%) reported completing such a course than did public school principals (31.6%).

TABLE 3

Distribution of Principals by School Type and Formal Coursework Status

| School Type | Formal Coursework Completed | | No Formal Coursework Completed | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | # | | # | |
| Public | 657 | (31.6%) | 1,425 | (68.4%) |
| Nonpublic | 314 | (38.5%) | 501 | (61.5%) |
| Total | 971 | (33.5%) | 1,926 | (66.5%) |

## Formal Workshops

Approximately two-thirds of the principals indicated they had attended a workshop or workshops dealing with development of young children within the past 10 years. As with completion of formal coursework, significantly more nonpublic school principals (69.4%) reported attending a workshop or workshops than did public school principals (64.8%). (See Table 4.)

TABLE 4

Distribution of Principals by Workshop Attendance Status and School Type

| School Type | Have Attended Workshops | | Have Not Attended Workshops | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public | 1,510 | (64.8%) | 822 | (35.2%) |
| Nonpublic | 606 | (69.4%) | 267 | (30.6%) |
| Total | 2,116 | (66.0%) | 1,089 | (34.0%) |

## Preprimary Teaching Experience, Coursework Completion and Workshop Attendance

Are principals with preprimary teaching experience more or less likely to have completed a formal course or courses or attended workshops dealing with the development of young children than their peers without such teaching experience? Cross-tabulation and analysis of the responses of principals to the items concerning teaching experience, coursework completion and workshop attendance revealed that principals with preprimary teaching experience were more likely than their less-experienced peers to have completed one or more formal courses on the development of young children or to have attended workshops related to this topic. (See Tables 5 and 6.)

Table 5 shows that while approximately one-third of the principals indicated they had completed a formal course or courses on the development of young children, over 60% of the principals with preprimary teaching experience had completed a formal course, compared to 29% of the principals without preprimary teaching experience. Further, of principals with preprimary teaching experience reporting no formal coursework, 22.6% indicated an interest in such coursework, compared to 17.6% of inexperienced principals with no formal coursework. Thus, principals with preprimary teaching experience but no formal coursework were more likely to express interest in such coursework than were their less-experienced peers.

TABLE 5

Education of Principals and Preprimary Teaching Experience*

| | Number and Percentage of Principals Indicating: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Formal Coursework Completed | | No Formal Coursework Completed | |
| Without experience | 731 | 29.22% | 1771 | 70.78% |
| With experience | 240 | 60.76% | 155 | 39.24% |
| Totals | 971 | 33.52% | 1926 | 66.48% |
| | Principals with No Formal Coursework But Indicating Interest in Coursework: | | | |
| Without experience | 312 | 17.6% | | |
| With experience | 35 | 22.6% | | |
| Totals | 347 | 18.0% | | |

*Percentages are based on the 2,897 principals responding to both items. "Teaching experience" refers to preprimary teaching experience.

Table 6 shows that while two-thirds of all principals have attended a workshop or workshops, 83% of the principals with preprimary teaching experience have attended a workshop, compared to 64% of the principals without preprimary teaching experience. Further, of the 17% of principals with preprimary teaching experience reporting no workshop attendance, 27 or 38% of them indicated an interest in such workshop, compared to 41.5% (427) of the principals without experience and reporting no workshop attendance. Thus, principals with preprimary teaching experience were far more likely to have attended a workshop, and they were slightly less likely to express interest in attending workshops if they had not previously done so than were their less-experienced peers.

TABLE 6

Preprimary Teaching and Workshop Experience of Principals*

| | Number and Percentage of Principals Indicating: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Have Attended Workshops | | Have Not Attended Workshops | |
| Without experience | 1,769 | 63.7% | 1,018 | 36.3% |
| With experience | 347 | 83.0% | 71 | 17.0% |
| Totals | 2,116 | 66.0% | 1,089 | 33.9% |
| | Principals Who Have Not Attended a Workshop But Would Be Interested in Attending a Workshop: | | | |
| Without experience | 427 | | 41.5% | |
| With experience | 27 | | 38.0% | |
| Totals | 454 | | 41.7% | |

## RESPONSES TO ISSUE STATEMENTS

Principals were asked to respond to eight issue statements based upon the rationales described in the following paragraphs. Their responses are summarized and described in the remainder of this section, and the patterns of responses among groups of principals are also shown.

The issue of school admission criteria centers upon divergent opinions concerning the congruence between children's chronological ages and their respective developmental ages in the practical context of establishing a fair and reasonable set of rules to determine which children can or must be admitted to kindergarten or first grade. The diversity of compulsory school attendance ages, permissive school admission ages, and kindergarten ages found in the various states led to assessing the principals' opinion on the appropriateness of using chronological age as a main criterion to determine placement of children in kindergarten and first grade programs. Principals were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement: "Chronological age should be the main criterion used to determine the placement of children in kindergarten and first grade."

The issue of all-day kindergarten centers upon divergent opinions concerning (a) whether daily attendance by kindergarten students for the full school day affects greater achievement by students than is attained by attending the traditional half-day, everyday kindergarten program or the equivalent all-day, alternate-day kindergarten program, and (b) whether kindergarten students are typically too immature to benefit from a well-designed kindergarten program that operates on a full-day basis. The current operation of all three types of kindergarten schedules and the increase in enrollments of children in full-day programs prompted a question on the full-day kindergarten. Principals were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement: "Public schools should operate the kindergarten program all-day everyday rather than half-day everyday or all-day on alternate days."

The issue of whether public schools should operate childcare, preschool and parent education programs is multi-faceted and was addressed through five questions. The first facet of this issue addressed the presence of unsupervised, latchkey children and the need and efficiency of providing before- and after-school childcare services for these children. Principals were asked to respond to the statement: "Each public school should offer before- and after-school childcare services (latchkey services) for all school-age children who need them."

The second facet of this issue reflects the fact that more children are enrolled in day-care, preschool, and nursery school as a result of (a) increased parental interest in securing early learning experiences for their children, (b) the increasing prevalence of single-parent families--where the parent is or is attempting to be actively engaged in the labor force, and (c) the increase in families where both parents work. Principals were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statements: "Public schools should offer a prekindergarten program to children between 3 and 5 years of age," and "Public schools should offer childcare and educational experiences to infants and children below 3 years of age."

The third facet of the issue involved the question of parent education. Significant attention has been given to the subject of parent education as a factor in improving childrearing practices which are likely to result in more effective parenting and better communications between parents and children. Therefore, principals were asked to respond to the statement: "Public schools should offer parent education programs for teenage and adult parents."

The last issue, dealing with the question of free or subsidized provision of services, reflects equity or equal opportunity concerns. Presently, some children have greater opportunities for early learning experiences because their parents possess the financial ability to purchase those services and are willing to do so, while many children lack such opportunities because their parents are financially unable to purchase such services. In securing equal educational opportunities, such opportunities could be provided free by public schools and financed by taxpayers and/or third-party payers, or provided on a tuition basis that incorporates subsidies keyed to the parents' ability to pay. Therefore, principals were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statements: "Any childcare or preschool services provided to parents by public schools should be provided at no cost to parents," and "Public schools should be allowed to charge tuition for childcare and preschool programs based upon parents' ability to pay."

Responses of All Principals

Principals disagreed (90.5%) most strongly with the statement: "Public schools should offer childcare and educational experiences to infants and children below 3 years of age." (See Table 7.) They agreed (78.1%) most strongly with the statement: "Public schools should offer parent education programs for teenage and adult parents." (See Table 8.) The vast majority (66.6%) of principals agreed that, "Public schools should be allowed to charge tuition for childcare and preschool programs based upon the parents' ability to pay." (See Table 9.) Conversely, the vast majority (78.4%) of principals disagreed that, "Childcare or preschool services provided to parents should be provided at no cost to parents." (See Table 10.)

Principals were almost equally divided on the statement: "Public schools should offer prekindergarten programs for children between 3 and 5 years of age," with 49.9% agreeing. (See Table 11.) They also were almost equally divided regarding kindergarten admission age: some 48.8% agreed that chronological age should be the primary criterion for kindergarten admission. (See Table 12). Regarding full-day kindergarten, 38.1% agreed that kindergarten should be operated on an all-day, everyday schedule, rather than on a half-day, everyday or all-day, alternate-day schedule. (See Table 13). Finally, principals were generally opposed to the provisions of before- and after-school latchkey programs, with 73.1% disagreeing with the statement: "Public schools should offer before- and after-school childcare (latchkey) services for all school-age children who need them." (See Table 14).

TABLE 7

Childcare and Educational Experiences
for Infants and Children below 3 Years of Age

| Response | # | % | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 86 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| Agree | 243 | 7.0 | 9.5 |
| Disagree | 1,470 | 42.4 | 51.9 |
| Strongly Disagree | 1,669 | 48.1 | 100.0 |

TABLE 8

Parent Education Programs for Teenage and Adult Parents

| Response | # | % | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 845 | 24.4 | 24.4 |
| Agree | 1,863 | 53.7 | 78.1 |
| Disagree | 552 | 15.9 | 94.0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 208 | 6.0 | 100.0 |

TABLE 9

Tuition for Childcare and Preschool Programs Based
upon the Parents' Ability to Pay

| Response | # | % | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 703 | 20.6 | 20.6 |
| Agree | 1,571 | 46.0 | 66.6 |
| Disagree | 765 | 22.4 | 89.0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 376 | 11.0 | 100.0 |

TABLE 10

Childcare or Preschool Services Provided at
No Cost to Parents

| Response | # | % | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 177 | 5.2 | 5.2 |
| Agree | 560 | 16.4 | 21.6 |
| Disagree | 1,560 | 45.7 | 67.3 |
| Strongly Disagree | 1,116 | 32.7 | 100.0 |

TABLE 11

Pre-Kindergarten Programs
(Between 3 and 5 years of age)

| Response | # | % | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 532 | 15.4 | 15.4 |
| Agree | 1,190 | 34.5 | 49.9 |
| Disagree | 1,212 | 35.1 | 85.0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 519 | 15.0 | 100.0 |

TABLE 12

Chronological Age Criterion

| Response | # | % | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 315 | 9.1 | 9.1 |
| Agree | 1,369 | 39.7 | 48.8 |
| Disagree | 1,312 | 38.0 | 86.8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 456 | 13.2 | 100.0 |

TABLE 13

Kindergarten Program Schedules
(Kindergarten Schedules should be operated all-day everyday)

| Response | # | % | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 529 | 15.4 | 15.4 |
| Agree | 788 | 22.7 | 38.1 |
| Disagree | 1,505 | 43.7 | 81.8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 624 | 18.1 | 99.9 |

TABLE 14

Before- and After-School Childcare Services

| Response | # | % | Cumulative % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 235 | 6.8 | 6.8 |
| Agree | 692 | 20.0 | 26.8 |
| Disagree | 1,548 | 44.8 | 70.6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 979 | 28.3 | 99.9 |

Responses of Principals by School Type

Responses of public and nonpublic school principals were compared. Proportionately, more nonpublic school principals agreed with the statements concerning latchkey services (37.6% vs. 22%), parent education programs (84.7% vs. 75.6%) and tuition charges (76.3% vs. 62.9%) than did public

school principals. In every instance except the issue of prekindergarten programs, the majority opinion (agreement or disagreement) of nonpublic school principals matched that of the public school principals.

Slightly over half (50.5%) of the nonpublic school principals agreed with the statement: "Public schools should offer a prekindergarten programs to children between 3 and 5 years of age," while slightly less than half (49.6%) of the public school principals agreed with this statement. (See Table 15.)

TABLE 15
Percentages of Public and Nonpublic Principals
Agreeing with Issue Statements

| ISSUE | % of Principals Agreeing with Issue Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public | Nonpublic | Difference | Overall |
| Age as Main Criterion | 49.7 | 46.4 | 3.3 | 48.8 |
| Latchkey Services | 22.8 | 37.6 | 14.8 | 26.8 |
| All-day Kindergarten | 40.1 | 33.1 | 7.0 | 38.1 |
| Prekindergarten Programs | 49.6 | 50.5 | 0.9 | 49.9 |
| Programs for 0 to 3-year-old Children | 9.8 | 8.7 | 1.1 | 9.5 |
| Parent Education Programs | 75.6 | 84.7 | 9.1 | 78.1 |
| Tuition-Based Programs | 62.9 | 76.3 | 13.4 | 66.6 |
| Free Services | 23.5 | 16.6 | 6.9 | 21.6 |

Responses of Principals by School Type and Teaching Experience

Table 16 shows the responses of public and nonpublic school principals subdivided into groups with and without preprimary teaching experience as well as the overall response of principals. The majority of public school principals without preprimary teaching experience (50.8%) agreed with the statement: "Chronological age should be the main criterion used to determine placement of children in kindergarten and first grade," while overall and among the three other groups of principals, the majority view was to the contrary.

A majority of public school principals with preprimary teaching experience (53.4%) agreed with the statement: "Public schools should operate the kindergarten program all-day everyday rather than half-day everyday or all day on alternate days," expressing a view far more favorable than the other groups. Majorities of both public and nonpublic school principals with preprimary teaching experience agreed that "Public schools should offer a pre-kindergarten program to children between 3 and 5 yeas of age," by 62.3% and 53.0%, respectively. The views of principals with preprimary teaching experience were generally similar to those of principals without preprimary teaching experience on all other opinion issues assessed in this survey

although more favorable towards providing services to young children. Thus, while the opinions of principals with preprimary teaching experience were generally more favorable than the opinions expressed by their less-experienced peers, the effect of experience was not sufficient to cause divergent majority opinions except concerning prekindergarten programs, all-day kindergartens, and the use of age as the main admission criterion.

TABLE 16

Percentages of Principals Agreeing with Statements by School Type and Teaching Experience

| | | Public | | Nonpublic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issue | Overall | With Preprimary Teaching Experience | Without Preprimary Teaching Experience | With Preprimary Teaching Experience | Without Preprimary Teaching Experience |
| Age as Main Criterion | 48.8 | 39.8 | 50.8 | 36.5 | 49.1 |
| Latchkey Services | 26.8 | 32.9 | 21.6 | 49.3 | 34.4 |
| All-day Kindergarten | 38.1 | 53.4 | 38.7 | 41.6 | 30.8 |
| Pre-Kindergarten Programs | 49.9 | 62.3 | 48.2 | 53.0 | 49.9 |
| Programs for 0 to 3-year-old Children | 9.5 | 19.1 | 8.8 | 14.4 | 7.2 |
| Parent Education Programs | 78.1 | 87.9 | 74.2 | 84.9 | 74.7 |
| Tuition-Based Programs | 66.6 | 69.4 | 62.2 | 65.1 | 76.5 |
| Free Services | 21.6 | 23.1 | 23.5 | 19.4 | 15.8 |

Responses of Principals by School Type and Course Completion

Table 17 shows the responses of public and nonpublic school principals subdivided by who did or did not complete a formal course related to early childhood education. The majority of public school principals who have not completed a formal course (51.8%) agreed with the statement: "Chronological age should be the main criterion used to determine the placement of children in kindergarten and first grade," while overall and among the three other groups of principals, the majority disagreed. This group of principals (public school principals with no coursework completed) also disagreed with the other three groups of principals on the issue of prekindergarten programs. Less than half of the public school principals without coursework (46.4%) agreed with the statement: "Public schools should offer a prekindergarten program to children between 3 and 5 years of age," while the majority of principals among the other three groups agreed with this

statement. Completion of formal coursework in the case of public school principals was consistently associated with more favorable responses concerning the provision of early childhood education programs, though such was not the case of nonpublic school principals who have completed coursework. Nonpublic school principals without coursework more strongly favored public school provision of prekindergarten programs than did their peers with coursework, and the same observation holds in the case of parent education.

TABLE 17

Percentages of Principals Agreeing with Statements
by School Type and Coursework Completion

| | Overall | Public | | Nonpublic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ISSUE | | With Coursework | Without Coursework | With Coursework | Without Coursework |
| Age as Main Criterion | 48.8 | 43.7 | 51.8 | 42.2 | 47.9 |
| Latchkey Services | 26.8 | 28.2 | 20.9 | 42.0 | 35.4 |
| All-day Kindergarten | 38.1 | 45.8 | 38.2 | 39.9 | 29.8 |
| Prekindergarten Programs | 49.9 | 58.7 | 46.4 | 50.5 | 55.6 |
| Programs for 0 to 3-year-old Children | 9.5 | 15.1 | 7.9 | 13.2 | 6.7 |
| Parent Education Programs | 78.1 | 81.7 | 73.4 | 82.3 | 85.9 |
| Tuition-Based Programs | 66.6 | 65.5 | 62.0 | 71.1 | 78.8 |
| Free Services | 21.6 | 22.9 | 23.7 | 19.2 | 15.4 |

Responses of Principals by School Type and Workshop Completion

Table 18 shows the responses of public and nonpublic school principals analyzed by those who have or have not attended a workshop(s) related to early childhood education. The majorities of both public and nonpublic school principals who have not attended a workshop agreed (52.1% and 50.4%) with the statement: "Chronological age should be the main criterion used to determine placement of children in kindergarten and first grade," while overall, and among the two groups of principals who have attended workshops, the majority disagreed. The majorities of both public and nonpublic school principals who did not attend any workshops related to early childhood education disagreed with the statement: "Public schools should offer a prekindergarten program to children between 3 and 5 years of age," while the majorities (52.7% and 53.4%) of public and nonpublic school principals who have attended workshops agreed with the statement. Both public and nonpublic school principals with workshop attendance consistently responded more favorably to the public school provision of early childhood education programs and services than did their peers who have not attended workshops.

TABLE 18

Percentages of Principals Agreeing with Statements
by School Type and Workshop Attendance

| ISSUE | Overall | Public | | Nonpublic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | With Workshop Attn. | Without Workshop Attn. | With Workshop Attn. | Without Workshop Attn. |
| Age as Main Criterion | 48.8 | 48.1 | 52.1 | 44.0 | 50.4 |
| Latchkey Services | 26.8 | 24.2 | 20.8 | 40.6 | 32.4 |
| All-day Kindergarten | 38.1 | 42.5 | 36.7 | 35.5 | 28.9 |
| Pre-Kindergarten Programs | 49.9 | 52.7 | 45.1 | 53.4 | 45.7 |
| Programs for 0 to 3-year-old Children | 9.5 | 10.9 | 8.2 | 9.6 | 7.3 |
| Parent Education Programs | 78.1 | 78.4 | 71.4 | 85.1 | 84.4 |
| Tuition-Based Programs | 66.6 | 63.5 | 62.1 | 76.1 | 76.7 |
| Free Services | 21.6 | 23.0 | 24.2 | 18.3 | 13.7 |

RESPONSES OF PRINCIPALS BY BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Tables 19 through 27 show the responses of public and nonpublic school principals subdivided into groups with various backgrounds and experience. The analysis groups were defined by a combination of preprimary teaching experience, completed formal coursework and workshop attendance. The most expert group of principals possess preprimary teaching experience, education and training/workshop attendance, while the other groups are absent one or more of these qualifications. The responses from the most expert groups are compared with the responses of principals absent all three qualifications in Table 19, while Tables 20 through 27 show the responses from all 16 analysis groups.

Responses of Principals with Extremes of Expertise

The majority of both public and nonpublic school principals who lacked preprimary teaching experience, coursework and workshop attendance (54.0% and 51.9%) agreed with the statement: "Chronological age should be the main criterion used to determine placement of children in kindergarten and first grade," while principals with all three qualifications registered a substantially different view (Table 19.)

The majority of public school principals with all three characteristics (55.6%) agreed with the statement: "Public schools should operate the kindergarten program all-day everyday rather than half-day everyday or all-day on alternate days," while the majorities of the other three groups registered the contrary view.

Both public and nonpublic school principals with all three characteristics (65.7% and 55.2%) agreed with the statement: "Public schools should offer a prekindergarten program to children between 3 and 5 years of age," while the other groups registered the contrary view.

In two instances, Latchkey Services and Programs for 0 to 3-year-old Children, substantially larger proportions of principals with all three characteristics agreed with the issue statements compared to the other groups of principals. Agreement constituted the minority opinion across all four groups, however.

TABLE 19

Percentages of Principals Agreeing with Issue Statement by School Type and Extremes of Expertise

| | | Public | | Nonpublic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Overall | With Exp./Educ./ Wrkshp | Without Exp./Educ./ Wrkshp | With Exp./Educ./ Wrkshp | Without Exp./Educ./ Wrkshp |
| Age as Main Criterion | 48.8 | 35.4 | 54.0 | 30.8 | 51.9 |
| Latchkey Services | 26.8 | 40.4 | 19.9 | 47.6 | 30.2 |
| All-day Kindergarten | 38.1 | 55.6 | 34.9 | 39.4 | 25.6 |
| Prekindergarten Programs | 49.9 | 65.7 | 42.5 | 55.2 | 46.6 |
| Programs for 1, 2, or 3-year-old Children | 9.5 | 25.5 | 6.9 | 17.5 | 6.0 |
| Parent Education Programs | 78.1 | 91.5 | 69.7 | 83.0 | 85.7 |
| Tuition-Based Programs | 66.6 | 74.2 | 60.3 | 71.3 | 79.5 |
| Free Services | 21.6 | 21.7 | 25.3 | 21.2 | 12.9 |

Responses to Issue Statements across All Background/Experience Groups

Issue Statement 1 - "Chronological age should be the main criterion used to determine placement of children in kindergarten and first grade."

Among the groups of responding principals, the strongest agreement (55.5%) was registered by nonpublic school principals with only preprimary teaching experience and no formal coursework or workshop attendance. Public school

principals with both preprimary teaching experience and formal coursework but no workshops attended (23.5%) were least likely to register agreement with the proposition. (See Table 20.)

TABLE 20

Chronological Age as an Admission Criterion

Chronological age should be the main criterion used to determine placement of children in kindergarten and first grade.

| Characteristics of Group | | | | % Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Statement | Group Majority Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | Preprimary Experience | Coursework Completed | Workshops Attended | | |
| Public | without | without | without | 54.8 | Agree |
| Public | without | without | with | 50.0 | - |
| Public | without | with | without | 40.2 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | with | 47.5 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | without | 45.1 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | with | 45.0 | Disagree |
| Public | with | with | without | 23.5 | Disagree |
| Public | with | with | with | 35.4 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | without | 51.9 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | with | 45.9 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | without | 46.9 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | with | 51.1 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | without | 55.5 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | with | 41.0 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | without | 43.8 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | with | 30.8 | Disagree |

Issue Statement 2 - "Each public school should offer before- and after-school childcare services (latchkey services) for all school-age children who need them."

All of the groups disagreed with this statement except nonpublic school principals with preprimary teaching experience who have attended a workshop but completed no formal courses (53.3%) and nonpublic school principals with preprimary teaching experience and formal coursework (75%). The group agreeing with the statement the least (19.7%) was the group comprised of public school principals with no experience or workshop attendance but who have completed a formal course. (See Table 21.)

TABLE 21

Latchkey Services

Each public school should offer latchkey services for all school-age children who need them.

| Characteristics of Group | | | | % Agreeing or | Group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | Preprimary Experience | Coursework Completed | Workshops Attended | Strongly Agreeing with Statement | Majority Opinion |
| Public | without | without | without | 19.9 | Disagree |
| Public | without | without | with | 20.6 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | without | 19.7 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | with | 27.6 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | without | 32.7 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | with | 26.6 | Disagree |
| Public | with | with | without | 33.3 | Disagree |
| Public | with | with | with | 40.4 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | without | 30.2 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | with | 37.1 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | without | 32.7 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | with | 37.4 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | without | 27.3 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | with | 53.3 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | without | 75.0 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | with | 47.6 | Disagree |

Issue Statement 3 - "Public schools should operate the kindergarten program all-day everyday rather than half-day everyday or all-day on alternate days."

A majority of four groups of principals agreed with this statement, including public school principals with experience and without coursework and workshop attendance (54.4%), public school principals with experience and coursework but without workshop attendance (66.7%), public school principals with experience and coursework and workshop attendance (55.6%), and nonpublic school principals with experience and coursework but no workshop attendance (75.0%). Nonpublic school principals without experience, coursework or workshop attendance (25.6%) agreed with the statement the least among the groups. (See Table 22.)

TABLE 22

All-Day Everyday Kindergarten Programming

Public schools should operate the kindergarten program all-day everyday rather than half-day everyday or all-day on alternate days.

| Characteristics of Group | | | | % Agreeing or | Group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | Preprimary Experience | Coursework Completed | Workshops Attended | Strongly Agreeing with Statement | Majority Opinion |
| Public | without | without | without | 34.9 | Disagree |
| Public | without | without | with | 39.4 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | without | 36.8 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | with | 45.1 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | without | 54.4 | Agree |
| Public | with | without | with | 46.8 | Disagree |
| Public | with | with | without | 66.7 | Agree |
| Public | with | with | with | 55.6 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | without | 25.6 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | with | 31.3 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | without | 32.7 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | with | 38.9 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | without | 27.3 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | with | 41.7 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | without | 75.0 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | with | 39.4 | Disagree |

Issue Statement 4 - "Public schools should offer a prekindergarten program to children between 3 and 5 years of age."

A majority of 5 of the 16 groups of principals disagreed with this statement, while one group (nonpublic principals without experience and with both coursework and workshop attendance) was evenly divided on the issue, and a majority of the 10 remaining groups agreed with the statement. Public school principals with experience and coursework but without workshop attendance (66.7%) agreed with the statement most frequently, while nonpublic school principals without experience, with coursework and without workshop attendance (40.0%) agreed with the statement least frequently. (See Table 23.)

TABLE 23

Prekindergarten Programs

Public schools should offer a prekindergarten program to children between 3 and 5 years of age.

| Characteristics of Group | | | | % Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Statement | Group Majority Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | Preprimary Experience | Coursework Completed | Workshops Attended | | |
| Public | without | without | without | 42.5 | Disagree |
| Public | without | without | with | 48.1 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | without | 55.6 | Agree |
| Public | without | with | with | 57.6 | Agree |
| Public | with | without | without | 54.9 | Agree |
| Public | with | without | with | 62.0 | Agree |
| Public | with | with | without | 66.7 | Agree |
| Public | with | with | with | 65.7 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | without | 46.6 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | with | 54.1 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | without | 40.0 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | with | 50.0 | - |
| Nonpublic | with | without | without | 40.9 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | with | 52.5 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | without | 56.3 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | with | 55.2 | Agree |

Issue Statement 5 - "Public school should offer childcare and educational experiences to infants and children below 3 years of age."

Overwhelmingly, principals disagreed with this proposition (9.5% of all principals agreeing). Half of the public school principals with both preprimary teaching experience and formal coursework agreed with this proposition, and 25.5% of the public school principals with preprimary teaching experience, formal coursework and workshop attendance agreed with the proposition. (See Table 24.)

TABLE 24

Programs for 1, 2, and 3-year-olds

Public schools should offer childcare and educational experiences to infants and children below 3 years of age.

| Characteristics of Group | | | | % Agreeing or | Group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | Preprimary Experience | Coursework Completed | Workshops Attended | Strongly Agreeing with Statement | Majority Opinion |
| Public | without | without | without | 6.9 | Disagree |
| Public | without | without | with | 8.6 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | without | 12.0 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | with | 12.1 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | without | 5.9 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | with | 12.7 | Disagree |
| Public | with | with | without | 50.0 | - |
| Public | with | with | with | 25.5 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | without | 6.0 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | with | 6.4 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | without | 12.0 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | with | 9.5 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | without | 4.6 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | with | 11.7 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | without | 18.8 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | with | 17.5 | Disagree |

Issue Statement 6 - "Public schools should offer parent education programs for teenage and adult parents."

More than three-fourths of all principals (78.1%) agreed with this proposition, and a large majority within each analysis group agreed with the proposition. The smallest proportion of principals agreeing with the proposition was among nonpublic school principals reporting only preprimary teaching experience (63.6%), while all of the nonpublic principals with experience and coursework and without workshop attendance agreed with the statement. (See Table 25.)

TABLE 25

Parent Education Programs

Public schools should offer parent education programs for teenage and adult parents.

| Characteristics of Group | | | | % Agreeing or | Group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | Preprimary Experience | Coursework Completed | Workshops Attended | Strongly Agreeing with Statement | Majority Opinion |
| Public | without | without | without | 69.7 | Agree |
| Public | without | without | with | 75.3 | Agree |
| Public | without | with | without | 76.0 | Agree |
| Public | without | with | with | 80.4 | Agree |
| Public | with | without | without | 80.4 | Agree |
| Public | with | without | with | 86.3 | Agree |
| Public | with | with | without | 94.4 | Agree |
| Public | with | with | with | 91.5 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | without | 85.7 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | with | 86.4 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | without | 79.6 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | with | 80.7 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | without | 63.6 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | with | 91.8 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | without | 100.0 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | with | 83.0 | Agree |

Issue Statement 7 - "Public schools should be allowed to charge tuition for childcare and preschool programs based upon parents' (or guardians') ability to pay."

Two-thirds (66.6%) of all principals agreed with this proposition, and more than 60% of principals within each and every analysis group agreed with this proposition. (See Table 26.) Percentages agreeing with this statement ranged from a low of 60.3% among public school principals without experience, coursework and workshop attendance to a high of 83.6% among nonpublic school principals with experience, without coursework and with workshop attendance.

TABLE 26

Tuition Charges Based upon Ability to Pay

Public schools should be allowed to charge tuition for childcare and preschool programs based upon parents' ability to pay.

| Characteristics of Group | | | | % Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Statement | Group Majority Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | Preprimary Experience | Coursework Completed | Workshops Attended | | |
| Public | without | without | without | 60.3 | Agree |
| Public | without | without | with | 63.6 | Agree |
| Public | without | with | without | 80.8 | Agree |
| Public | without | with | with | 61.5 | Agree |
| Public | with | without | without | 66.7 | Agree |
| Public | with | without | with | 63.1 | Agree |
| Public | with | with | without | 77.8 | Agree |
| Public | with | with | with | 74.2 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | without | 79.5 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | with | 77.5 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | without | 66.0 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | with | 73.1 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | without | 73.9 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | with | 83.6 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | without | 68.8 | Agree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | with | 71.3 | Agree |

Issue Statement 8 - "Any childcare or preschool services provided to parents by public schools should be provided at no cost to parents."

Less than one-fourth (21.6%) of all principals agreed with this proposition, and less than one-third of the principals in each and every analysis group agreed with this proposition. The proportions of principals agreeing with the proposition ranged from 9.1% (nonpublic principals with experience but no coursework or workshop attendance) to 28.6% (public principals with experience, no coursework, but with workshop attendance). (See Table 27.)

TABLE 27

Free Programs and Services

Any childcare or preschool services provided to parents by public schools should be provided at no cost to parents.

| Characteristics of Group | | | | % Agreeing or | Group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Type | Preprimary Experience | Coursework Completed | Workshops Attended | Strongly Agreeing with Statement | Majority Opinion |
| Public | without | without | without | 25.3 | Disagree |
| Public | without | without | with | 21.9 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | without | 19.3 | Disagree |
| Public | without | with | with | 24.6 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | without | 21.6 | Disagree |
| Public | with | without | with | 28.6 | Disagree |
| Public | with | with | without | 11.8 | Disagree |
| Public | with | with | with | 21.7 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | without | 12.9 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | without | with | 17.5 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | without | 16.0 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | without | with | with | 18.0 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | without | 9.1 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | without | with | 18.3 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | without | 26.7 | Disagree |
| Nonpublic | with | with | with | 21.2 | Disagree |

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Summary

Almost 40% of the elementary school principals reported teaching experience limited to a single grade span, with 1.3% reporting experience limited to the preprimary level (i.e. grades prekindergarten and kindergarten); 1.6% reporting experience limited to the primary grades (i.e. grades 1, 2 and 3), 32.7% reporting experience limited to the middle-school grades (i.e. grades 4 through 8), and 4.2% reporting experience limited to the high-school grades (i.e. grades 9 through 12). Thirteen percent of the principals reported some experience at the preprimary level, while almost 35% reported some experience at the primary level, almost 81% reported some experience at the middle-school level, almost 29% reported some experience at the high-school level, and slightly more than 9% did not indicate experience at any level. Less than 8% of the principals reported experience spanning the preprimary, primary and middle-school grades.

Approximately one-third (33.5%) of the principals reported they had completed one or more formal courses dealing with the development of children below age 8, while only 18% of the principals who have not completed such coursework indicated an interest in doing so.

Almost two-thirds (66.0%) of the principals indicated they had attended one or more workshops dealing with the development of children below age 8, while less than half (42%) of the principals who have not attended a workshop indicated an interest in attending one.

From these data, a "typical" elementary school principal has middle-school teaching experience and does not have teaching experience below the fourth grade level. He or she is likely to have attended one or more workshops related to early childhood education but is unlikely to have completed any formal coursework on the subject. If he or she has not completed a formal course or attended a workshop, he or she is unlikely to express interest in either attending a workshop or completing a formal course.

Elementary school principals agreed with the concept of public school provision of parent education programs (78.1%), and with charging tuition based upon parent's ability to pay for early childhood education programs offered by public schools (66.6%). They disagreed with the concepts of (a) public school provision of childcare and educational service for children under age 3 (90.5%); (b) free provision of any early childhood programs operated by public schools (78.4%) (c) public school provision of latchkey services (73.2%); (d) operation of kindergartens on an all-day, everyday basis rather than on a half-day, everyday or all-day, alternate-day basis (61.9%); and (e) use of chronological age as the primary criterion to determine placement of children in kindergarten and first grade (51.2%).

Elementary school principals were almost equally divided regarding the provision of prekindergarten programs for 3 to 5-year-old children by public schools, with 50.1% registering opposition and 49.9% registering agreement with the proportion.

The factors of preprimary teaching experience, formal coursework and workshop attendance were generally associated with a more positive response to public school provision of early childhood education programs. In the case of the issues of admission criteria and prekindergarten programs, the influence of these factors was reflected by divergent majority opinions between the respective groups with and without teaching experience, formal coursework, and workshop attendance. Teaching experience, formal coursework and workshop attendance do influence the opinions expressed by principals.

## Conclusions

If the provision of early childhood education programming in the public schools is to be expanded and improved, and if principals are to play an educational leadership role in the process, there is a need for inservice training in early childhood education on a rather large scale for principals.

Principals do not appear to be aware of the efficacy of early childhood education. If they do recognize the efficacy of early childhood education, they may be concerned about the short-term costs of implementing such programming or the impact such programming might have upon the need for subsequent curriculum modification. In either case, principals are unlikely to assume leadership in this area unless they are strongly convinced of the efficacy and practical feasibility of such programs.

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# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM
## Survey of Illinois Schools

DEFINITIONS:

Early childhood education means programs and services directed toward the care, development, and education of non-handicapped children between the ages of birth and eight years.

Childcare services are services that provide primarily supervision and custodial care for children. Childcare services may have an educational component.

Preschool services are services which emphasize educational and developmental activities as the primary focus of an organized and planned program for children not yet enrolled in kindergarten.

Latch-key programs are programs designed to provide supervision of children before and/or after regular school hours.

Transitional grades are intermediate grades that overlap two or more of the traditional grades kindergarten, 1, 2, or 3, and are designed for students who need additional educational services before transferring into the regular traditional grade. Children enrolled in these transitional grades may or may not be eligible for special education services.

Academically oriented programs refers to programs where the primary emphasis is on direct, formal instruction to develop reading and math skills.

Experiential/social/play oriented programs refers to programs where the primary emphasis is on child selected activities with concrete materials and experiences based on individual children's readiness for such experiences.

Parent education programs are programs designed to teach parents of young children methods and techniques of effective child development.

**PART I Instructions:**

*Items 1 through 7 are for the purpose of assessing the need, supply, and demand for various types of early childhood education programs as perceived by principals in Illinois elementary schools (and other schools with ECE programs).*

1. Which of the following best describes your perception of the current demand by parents for childcare/preschool services in the area served by your school?

(16) ☐ 1. Very High ☐ 2. High ☐ 3. Low ☐ 4. Very Low

2. Which of the following best describes the current supply of childcare/preschool services within the area served by your school relative to the demand by parents for such services?

(17) ☐ 1. Supply exceeds demand ☐ 2. Supply approximately equals demand ☐ 3. Supply is less than demand ☐ 4. Supply is much less than demand

3. What number of your currently enrolled students do you estimate need before or after school (latch-key) childcare?

(18-21) _____ Number (22) ☐ Don't know

4. What number of your entering Kindergarten population do you estimate have attended a preschool or childcare center?

(23-26) _____ Number (27) ☐ Don't know

5. Is there a regular system of communication and coordination between and among officials in your school, public school district officials and officials from local childcare centers and preschools?

(28) ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

*If yes, which of the following kinds of officials are included in the communications network?*

(29) ☐ Local public school officials
(30) ☐ Local private school officials
(31) ☐ Local daycare providers
(32) ☐ Local homecare providers
(33) ☐ Other (please specify) _____

6. Are any childcare or preschool programs operated in your school building by some other public or nonpublic agency or parent volunteers?

(34) ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

7. If yes, check the appropriate descriptor in each column below:

| Type of Program | Operated By | School Space is |
|---|---|---|
| (35) ☐ Childcare | (37) ☐ Private agency | (40) ☐ Rented/Leased |
| (36) ☐ Preschool | (38) ☐ Parent group | (41) ☐ Donated |
| | (39) ☐ Other Public Agency (specify) _____ | |

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**PART II Instructions:**

*Items 8 through 13 are for the purpose of obtaining information about the types of Kindergarten programs currently in operation and screening instruments used at the Kindergarten level for various purposes. Please check the appropriate response or responses to each item as indicated.*

8. Record the number of Kindergarten programs of each type listed below which are operating in your school.

(16-17)_____ a. Regular half-day everyday Kindergarten with academic orientation
(18-19)_____ b. Regular half-day everyday Kindergarten with experiential/social/play orientation
(20-21)_____ c. All day alternate day Kindergarten with academic orientation
(22-23)_____ d. All day alternate day Kindergarten with experiential/social/play orientation
(24-25)_____ e. All day everyday Kindergarten with academic orientation
(26-27)_____ f. All day everyday Kindergarten with experiential/social/play orientation
(28-29)_____ g. Transitional Kindergarten
(30-31)_____ h. Other(s), describe: _____

9. Have you modified your Kindergarten curriculum or added additional curricular options within the past 5 years to deal with differences in the readiness between children with preschool/childcare experience and children without such experience? Why?

(32) ☐ 1. YES Curriculum was modified for this reason.
☐ 2. YES Additional curricular options were added for this reason.
☐ 3. YES But, not because of differences in readiness of children with or without preschool experience.
Specify reason: _____
☐ 4. NO No differences in readiness have been observed.
☐ 5. NO No curricular changes have been needed or made for this reason.
☐ 6. NO But, curricular changes for this reason are anticipated in the near future.

10. Will your school offer a regular Kindergarten program for children to begin their schooling January or February, rather than this Fall?

(33) ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

11. Does your school or district routinely conduct developmental screening (other than Health, Vision, Hearing and Special Education Screening) for all children upon entrance to Kindergarten?

(34) ☐ 1. Yes (Please answer questions 12 and 13)
☐ 2. No (Skip to question 14)

12. When was developmental screening or testing conducted for children who will enroll in Kindergarten in the Fall term of the 1984-85 school year?

(35) ☐ March 84 (37) ☐ May 84 (39) ☐ July 84 (41) ☐ September 84
(36) ☐ April 84 (38) ☐ June 84 (40) ☐ August 84 (42) ☐ Other (specify)

13. PURPOSES

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*INSTRUCTIONS: Which screening tests were used and for what purposes? Please place a check mark for each purpose which applies to each of the thirteen tests or instruments separately.*

| Development of a Kindergarten instructional plan for each child (Other than the IEP for Special Education) | Identification of children with potential special needs | Placement in alternative Kindergarten program | Recommendations for delay into Kindergarten | Other (please specify) | SCREENING INSTRUMENTS/TESTS: |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (16)___ | (17)___ | (18)___ | (19)___ | (20)___ | ABC Inventory to Determine Kindergarten Readiness |
| (21)___ | (22)___ | (23)___ | (24)___ | (25)___ | Boehm Test of Basic Concepts |
| (26)___ | (27)___ | (28)___ | (29)___ | (30)___ | Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Basic Skills |
| (31)___ | (32)___ | (33)___ | (34)___ | (35)___ | Denver Developmental Screening Test |
| (36)___ | (37)___ | (38)___ | (39)___ | (40)___ | DIAL (Developmental Indicator for Assessment of Learning) |
| (41)___ | (42)___ | (43)___ | (44)___ | (45)___ | Gesell Kindergarten Readiness Screening Test |
| (46)___ | (47)___ | (48)___ | (49)___ | (50)___ | Metropolitan Readiness Tests |
| (51)___ | (52)___ | (53)___ | (54)___ | (55)___ | Peabody Picture Vocabulary |
| (56)___ | (57)___ | (58)___ | (59)___ | (60)___ | Peotone Early Prevention of School Failure |
| (61)___ | (62)___ | (63)___ | (64)___ | (65)___ | Portage Checklist |
| (66)___ | (67)___ | (68)___ | (69)___ | (70)___ | Screening Test of Academic Readiness |
| (16)___ | (17)___ | (18)___ | (19)___ | (20)___ | Other(s), specify: _____ |
| (21)___ | (22)___ | (23)___ | (24)___ | (25)___ | Locally developed test(s) |

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**PART III Instructions:**

*Items 14 through 21 are designed to solicit the opinions of principals statewide regarding their view of the appropriate role of public schools in various aspects of early childhood education. Item 22 asks information concerning direct teaching experience at various levels for use in analyzing the results of this survey, and Item 23 asks for information concerning coursework or workshops in the area of child development. Please check the response to Items 15 through 21 that most accurately reflects your opinion on the issue addressed by each item. For Item 22 record the number of years of teaching experience you have had at each of the levels indicated. For Item 23 check the appropriate response.*

NOTE: For Items 14 through 21 which follow, respond in accordance with your opinion AS IF COSTS WERE NOT A FACTOR. Nonpublic school officials are asked to respond to these items as well even though the questions deal with public school issues.

Do you agree or disagree that:

14. Chronological age should be the main criterion used to determine placement of children in kindergarten and first grade.

*(16)* ____ 1. Strongly Agree ____ 2. Agree ____ 3. Disagree ____ 4. Strongly Disagree

15. Each public school should offer before and after school childcare services (latch key services) for all school age children who need it.

*(17)* ____ 1. Strongly Agree ____ 2. Agree ____ 3. Disagree ____ 4. Strongly Disagree

16. Public schools should operate the Kindergarten program all-day everyday rather than half-day everyday or all-day on alternate days.

*(18)* ____ 1. Strongly Agree ____ 2. Agree ____ 3. Disagree ____ 4. Strongly Disagree

17. Public schools should offer a pre-kindergarten program to children between 3 and 5 years of age.

*(19)* ____ 1. Strongly Agree ____ 2. Agree ____ 3 Disagree ____ 4. Strongly Disagree

18. Public schools should offer childcare and educational experiences to infants and children below 3 years of age.

*(20)* ____ 1. Strongly Agree ____ 2. Agree ____ 3. Disagree ____ 4. Strongly Disagree

19. Public schools should offer parent education programs for teenage and adult parents.

*(21)* ____ 1. Strongly Agree ____ 2. Agree ____ 3. Disagree ____ 4. Strongly Disagree

20. Public schools should be allowed to charge tuition for childcare and preschool programs based upon the parents' (or guardians') ability to pay.

*(22)* ____ 1. Strongly Agree ____ 2. Agree ____ 3. Disagree ____ 4. Strongly Disagree

21. Any childcare or preschool services provided to parents by public schools should be provided at no cost to parents.

*(23)* ____ 1. Strongly Agree ____ 2. Agree ____ 3. Disagree ____ 4. Strongly Disagree

22. At which of the following levels or grades have you, the principal, had previous classroom teaching experience? (Record the approximate numbers of years taught at each level in the spaces provided.)

*(24-25)* ____ Pre-kindergarten *(28-29)* ____ Grade 1 *(32-33)* ____ Grade 3 *(36-37)* ____ Grades 9 to 12

*(26-27)* ____ Kindergarten *(30-31)* ____ Grade 2 *(34-35)* ____ Grade 4 to 8 *(38)* ____ None (check if none)

23. Within the last 10 years, have you, the principal, had any formal coursework or attended workshops that focused primarily on the development of young children (i.e. children below age 8)?

**(check one)**

*(39)* ____ 1. Yes, formal courses ____ 2. No formal courses ____ 3. No, but interested in formal courses

**(check one)**

*(40)* ____ 1. Yes, workshops ____ 2. No workshops ____ 3. No, but interested in workshops

**(79-80) Record 05**



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**PART IV Instructions:** *This part is to be completed only if an early childhood education program other than a regular half-day everyday kindergarten program or special education program is operated in your school under your jurisdiction. Use one column for each program. Record the information requested regarding each program in the space provided according to the instructions along side each item 1 through 13.*

| PRINCIPAL'S NAME | TELEPHONE NUMBER | PROGRAM 1 | PROGRAM 2 | PROGRAM 3 | PROGRAM 4 | PROGRAM 5 | PROGRAM 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Record the name of this program as used in the district to describe the program. | | | | | | | |
| 2. Check the number which best describes the type of program. (Check 1 number for each program) See definitions on page 1. | | *(16)* | *(16)* | *(16)* | *(16)* | *(16)* | *(16)* |
| 1. Transitional | 5. Kindergarten--all-day everyday | ___ 1. ___ 5. | ___ 1. ___ 5. | ___ 1. ___ 5. | ___ 1. ___ 5. | ___ 1. ___ 5. | ___ 1. ___ 5. |
| 2. Childcare | 6. Kindergarten--all-day alternate day | ___ 2. ___ 6. | ___ 2. ___ 6. | ___ 2. ___ 6. | ___ 2. ___ 6. | ___ 2. ___ 6. | ___ 2. ___ 6. |
| 3. Latch Key (5 yrs. & up) | 7. Head Start Program | ___ 3. ___ 7. | ___ 3. ___ 7. | ___ 3. ___ 7. | ___ 3. ___ 7. | ___ 3. ___ 7. | ___ 3. ___ 7. |
| 4. Preschool | 8. Other--specify | ___ 4. ___ 8. Specify | ___ 4. ___ 8. Specify | ___ 4. ___ 8. Specify | ___ 4. ___ 8. Specify | ___ 4. ___ 8. Specify | ___ 4. ___ 8. Specify |
| 3. Is this program primarily: (Check 1 number for each program) | | *(17)* | *(17)* | *(17)* | *(17)* | *(17)* | *(17)* |
| 1. Academically oriented | | ___ 1. | ___ 1. | ___ 1. | ___ 1. | ___ 1. | ___ 1. |
| 2. Experiential/social/play oriented | | ___ 2. | ___ 2. | ___ 2. | ___ 2. | ___ 2. | ___ 2. |
| 3. Balance of both | | ___ 3. | ___ 3. | ___ 3. | ___ 3. | ___ 3. | ___ 3. |
| 4. How many children are served in this program? | | *(18-21)* _____ | *(18-21)* _____ | *(18-21)* _____ | *(18-21)* _____ | *(18-21)* _____ | *(18-21)* _____ |
| 5a. Is there a waiting list for this program? | | *(22)* ___ 1. Yes ___ 2. No | *(22)* ___ 1. Yes ___ 2. No | *(22)* ___ 1. Yes ___ 2. No | *(22)* ___ 1. Yes ___ 2. No | *(22)* ___ 1. Yes ___ 2. No | *(22)* ___ 1. Yes ___ 2. No |
| 5b. If 5a. is "Yes," how many children are on the waiting list? | | *(23-26)* _____ | *(23-26)* _____ | *(23-26)* _____ | *(23-26)* _____ | *(23-26)* _____ | *(23-26)* _____ |
| 6. What is the age range of children served in this program? | | Youngest *(27-28)* ___ Yrs. *(29-30)* ___ Mos. Oldest: *(31-32)* ___ Yrs. *(33-34)* ___ Mos. | Youngest *(27-28)* ___ Yrs. *(29-30)* ___ Mos. Oldest: *(31-32)* ___ Yrs. *(33-34)* ___ Mos. | Youngest *(27-28)* ___ Yrs. *(29-30)* ___ Mos. Oldest: *(31-32)* ___ Yrs. *(33-34)* ___ Mos. | Youngest *(27-28)* ___ Yrs. *(29-30)* ___ Mos. Oldest: *(31-32)* ___ Yrs. *(33-34)* ___ Mos. | Youngest *(27-28)* ___ Yrs. *(29-30)* ___ Mos. Oldest: *(31-32)* ___ Yrs. *(33-34)* ___ Mos. | Youngest *(27-28)* ___ Yrs. *(29-30)* ___ Mos. Oldest: *(31-32)* ___ Yrs. *(33-34)* ___ Mos. |

**PART III Instructions:**

*Items 14 through 21 are designed to solicit the opinions of principals statewide regarding their view of the appropriate role of publi schools in various aspects of early childhood education. Item 22 asks information concerning direct teaching experience at variou levels for use in analyzing the results of this survey, and Item 23 asks for information concerning coursework or workshops in the are of child development. Please check the response to Items 15 through 21 that most accurately reflects your opinion on the issue ad dressed by each item. For Item 22 record the number of years of teaching experience you have had at each of the levels indicated For Item 23 check the appropriate response.*

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*(26-27)* ____ Kindergarten *(30-31)* ____ Grade 2 *(34-35)* ____ Grade 4 to 8 *(38)* ____ None (check if none)

23. Within the last 10 years, have you, the principal, had any formal coursework or attended workshops that focused primarily on the development of young children (i.e. children below age 8)?

**(check one)**

*(39)* ____ 1. Yes, formal courses ____ 2. No formal courses ____ 3. No, but interested in formal courses

**(check one)**

*(40)* ____ 1. Yes, workshops ____ 2. No workshops ____ 3. No, but interested in workshops

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